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Book Reviews

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Francklyn Land & Cattle Company. By Lester Fields Sheffy. Austin (University of Texas Press), 1963. xvi+402 pp. Illustrations, maps, and index. \$6.50

In the past two decades historians of the American West have shown increased interest in the development of frontier business institutions. This concern has resulted in a number of first rate studies of the American fur trade, transportation, and more recently, land companies. The volume under review is a valuable contribution to an understanding of a major business institution of the Texas Panhandle, the Francklyn Land and Cattle Company.

The Francklyn Land and Cattle Company was organized in 1882 under the laws of New Jersey with a capital stock of \$3,000,000 with Charles G. Francklyn of New York, who held extensive mining and railroad interests in the Southwest, as president. In November of that year the Francklyn Company purchased over half a million acres of land in Hutchinson, Roberts, Carson, and Gray Counties north of the Palo Duro canyon. These grazing lands, known as the White Deer lands, were actually held by the Francklyn Company for only four years, passing into the hands of British bondholders in 1886 after the collapse of the Francklyn enterprises. For the next sixty years these lands were held and operated under the supervision of the British holders, chief of whom was Lord Roseberry, one of the wealthiest men in the world.

This volume is the first thorough study of the White Deer Lands and the men involved in the Francklyn Land and Cattle Company and its successors. The author, Professor Lester F. Sheffy of West Texas State College, was for eighteen years editor of the *Panhandle Plains Historical Review* and is perhaps the best known chronicler of the Panhandle saga. The complete files of the Francklyn Company were recently donated to the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum at Canyon and Professor Sheffy has made full use of these records in tracing the development of the White Deer Lands.

In many ways this is a story of hardship, discouragement, and failure. Droughts, fires, floods, Texas fever, blizzards, and unsettled business conditions in the cattle market plagued Colonel B. B. Groom, Texas agent for Francklyn, and led to the failure of the company.

This is an impressive study and will be a vital source book for students of Texas and Western history. One does regret, however, that Professor Sheffy limited himself so exclusively to the role of narrator and presented little analysis or interpretation. Too, the lengthy and rather numerous direct quotations will discourage many general readers while the lack of specific footnote citations and formal bibliography will annoy scholars.

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Not Without Honor: The Life of John H. Reagan. By Ben H. Procter. Austin (University of Texas Press), 1962. xii+361 pp. Illustrations, index. \$6.00

Ben H. Procter, a professor of history at Texas Christian University has written the only definitive biography of John H. Reagan, the great public servant of the Lone Star State from Palestine, to date.

This is the edited version of Procter's doctoral dissertation at Harvard. It does both the subject and the author credit.

Procter won a Phi Beta Kappa key and played football while at Texas University. He has produced a book dependable as to historical fact, interesting as to content, and gap-filling in the literature of Texas history. As printed, the book is handsomely attractive, and, costwise, none too dear.

Reagan, the "Old Roman" of Texas politics, served his people as justice of the peace, district judge, Congressman, secession conventioneer, Confederate Congressman, Confederate cabinet member, Texas constitutional convention chairman, Congressman again, U. S. Senator, and chairman of the Texas Railroad Commission.

He lived and labored in the Republic, Texas as a state in the Union and Confederacy, the Confederacy and the United States. He even went to prison with Jefferson Davis. Years later he resigned from the U. S. Senate to become chairman of the Railroad Commission, to be appointed three times and elected once.

Procter has delineated the life and times of Reagan thoroughly and well. The adroit, adept TCU professor writes with clarity and preciseness, and his sources appear reliable. His reporting is trustworthy in almost every instance.

Historians, students (especially on the college level), and general readers interested in the stirring story of this outstanding lover and servant of Texas, will trust, like and enjoy "Not Without Honor."

EDWIN W. RICE

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